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UNITED NATIONS COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 541st MEETING

Held at Swawek Hall, Windhoek, Namibia
on Wednesday, 11 April 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. ZUZE (Zambia)

Adoption of the final documents

Statement by Mr. Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia

Closure of the special plenary meetings

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE FINAL DOCUMENTS

The PRESIDENT: We shall now take up agenda item 6, adoption of the Declaration of the Special Plenary Meetings. A Committee of the Whole was established to consider this item on behalf of the Council and completed its work in a single session held yesterday afternoon under the chairmanship of Ambassador Aksin of Turkey.

I call on Ambassador Sorensen of Venezuela, Rapporteur of the Committee of the Whole, to submit its report.

Mr. SORENSEN (Venezuela), Rapporteur of the Committee of the Whole: The Committee of the Whole of the Special Plenary Meetings concluded its work in a single session held yesterday afternoon. After hearing the report of the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, the Committee adopted by acclamation a draft Declaration of the Special Plenary Meetings contained in document A/AC.131/1990/SPM/CRP.6/Rev.5.

The approval that greeted the draft Declaration in the Committee of the Whole is a tribute to the wise guidance provided by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Mr. Gordon Bristol of Nigeria, and the spirit that prevailed in the Committee. We are grateful to Mr. Bristol and the other members of the Drafting Committee for facilitating our task in the Committee of the Whole.

On behalf of the Committee of the Whole, I commend the draft Declaration.

The PRESIDENT: At the request of the host Government, the following amendments are proposed to paragraph 3 of the draft Declaration: delete "direct participation", from the second line and add in the third line, after the word "liberation",

"in which the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) played the leading role".

(The President)

It is also proposed to insert two new, additional paragraphs after paragraph 5. They do not depart very much from an agreed document that we are to consider later.

New paragraph 6 reads as follows:

"The United Nations Council for Namibia notes with appreciation the very important and inspiring address of His Excellency, Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, at the commencement of the meeting."

(The President)

New paragraph 7 reads as follows:

"The Council expresses its profound gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for the invitation extended to the Council to hold its special plenary meetings at Windhoek and for the facilities provided for that purpose, which have contributed to the success of the meetings, and in particular for the very generous and warm hospitality accorded to the participants, observers and secretariat staff throughout their stay in Namibia".

The subsequent paragraphs will be renumbered accordingly.

Mr. VAN DAELE (Belgium) (interpretation from French): You, Sir, are in the best position to know that the document now before us is the fruit of long deliberations in New York and here in Windhoek, a process in which all members of the Council worked in a spirit of compromise and co-operation, which indeed has been a feature of our work over the years and which has enabled the Council to be as effective as it has been.

However - and in saying this I believe that I speak not only on my own behalf, but also on behalf of other Western delegations - it seems that specific amendments have been proposed at the last moment. We should like to express our concern over the way in which certain amendments have been proposed and over their scope, and our hesitation over accepting them. Given the time and place, we do not wish to prevent a consensus being reached on the text that has been presented, but we would wish those comments to be recorded in the records of our meetings.

The PRESIDENT: If there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Council adopts the draft Declaration, as amended.

The draft Declaration, as amended, was adopted.

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The PRESIDENT: A draft resolution of thanks to the Government and people of Namibia has been circulated to members of the Council. I call on Mr. Insanally, Vice-President of the Council, to introduce it.

Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana): At the conclusion of these special plenary meetings of the Council for Namibia it is unanimously agreed, I believe, that the experience has been a unique and exhilarating one.

Three weeks ago today the new nation of Namibia was born. Twenty-one days is but a moment in the life of a people, and yet in that brief time, Namibia has already emerged as an important and respected member of the international community. We of the United Nations Council for Namibia were honoured and privileged to be witnesses to that historic event. For 23 years we were denied access to the Territory that under the terms of General Assembly resolution 2248 (S-V) we were mandated to administer. For 23 years we were denied the opportunity of meeting with those men, women and children whose welfare we were required to defend. And yet during those 23 years we were always confident that, with the support of the valiant Namibian people and of the international community, our sacred mission would one day be fully discharged.

That day has now come. The United Nations Council for Namibia stands today on the verge of dissolution. In taking our leave, we shall for ever remember and cherish the special role that we were called upon to play in promoting Namibia to nationhood. We are truly grateful for that opportunity, for, as was said at the opening of these meetings, the struggle of the Namibian people has reinforced and reinvigorated the United Nations itself. Namibia's independence is therefore reward enough for our labour.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Over the past few days, however, we have been further blessed by the thoughtful recognition and generous hospitality of the Government and people of Namibia. That gesture of appreciation has touched the hearts of us all. Accordingly, I wish to propose, on behalf of those present on this occasion, a resolution of thanks to the Government and people of Namibia. The draft resolution, contained in document A/AC.131/1990/SPM/CRP.9 reads as follows:

"The United Nations Council for Namibia,

"Having met in special plenary meetings at Windhoek from 9 to 11 April 1990, in fulfilment of its mandate to the people of Namibia in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967,

"Profoundly moved by the generosity and affection it has received from the people of Namibia,

"Noting with appreciation the very important and inspiring address of His Excellency Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, at the commencement of the meeting,

"Expresses its profound gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for the invitation extended to the Council to hold its special plenary meetings at Windhoek and for the facilities provided for that purpose, which have contributed to the success of the meetings, and in particular for the very generous and warm hospitality accorded to the participants, observers, and secretariat staff throughout their stay in Namibia."

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

As will be noted, the substance of the last two paragraphs has been incorporated into the Declaration that we have just adopted. It is expected, therefore, that the draft resolution will be adopted by acclamation.

Mr. SEBURYAMO (Burundi) (interpretation from French): We have no substantive comment to make on the second preambular paragraph, which says that the Council is profoundly moved by the generosity and affection of the people of Namibia, but we should have liked the word "generosity" to be strengthened in some way. That may depend on our understanding of the language, but we should have preferred "generous welcome and affection".

The PRESIDENT: That suggestion has, I believe, been understood and accepted by all those present, so I take it that the Council accepts the proposal to replace the phrase "generosity and affection" in the draft resolution with "generous welcome and affection".

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I take it that the Council adopts the draft resolution of thanks, as amended.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: I have been informed that a draft resolution expressing some kind sentiments about me and my country has also been circulated, on the initiative of the Algerian delegation. I call on the representative of Algeria to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. MIMOUNI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): My delegation has the honour and privilege to submit for adoption by our Council the draft resolution unanimously approved by the Drafting Committee contained in document A/AC.131/1990/SPM/CRP.10. This draft resolution expresses the Council's sincere gratitude to Zambia and its worthy representative, Ambassador Peter D. Zuze.

If the independence of Namibia represents a triumph for our collective commitment to the Namibian people since the establishment of our Council in 1967, then above all we owe that triumph, Mr. President, to your great country, Zambia, which, under the enlightened leadership of President Kenneth Kaunda, has always shown a tireless commitment to the total liberation of the African continent and has stood firmly on the side of peoples fighting for the restoration of their rights, freedom and independence. Therefore, it is not by mere chance that your country, Zambia, has been totally dedicated to the cause of Namibia and has delegated its most illustrious son to guide the work of our Council.

Since its establishment the Council has benefited successively from the invaluable contribution and support given by Ambassadors Rupia Banda, Kamana, Gwendoline, Paul Lusaka and Peter Zuze.

As we come to the end of our last meeting and note that the mandate entrusted to us by the General Assembly has been accomplished, the Council for Namibia must take this opportunity to express its gratitude to Zambia for its role in the Council's work and the unfailing support it has given the Council. Similarly, we could not fail to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our President,

(Mr. Mimouni, Algeria)

Ambassador Zuze, who since his election as President four years ago has displayed remarkable skill and total dedication in fulfilling his lofty responsibilities. His talents as a skilled and informed diplomat, his high sense of responsibility and his wisdom have always been a source of inspiration for the Council's work. Thus, Sir, we are certain that your personal qualities, together with your valuable contribution to the fulfilment of our mandate and to the success of our noble mission, will always remain engraved in the history of our Council.

I believe that I am speaking on behalf of all the members of the Council in expressing to you, Sir, our affection and respect and the pleasure and satisfaction that we have had in working at your side and under your skilful guidance. That is why my delegation, on this historic occasion, proposes the adoption by acclamation of the following draft resolution:

"The United Nations Council for Namibia

"Recalls the steadfast support it has received from the Government and people of Zambia,

"Pays tribute to Ambassador Peter D. Zuze, President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, for his leadership which inspired its work.

"Places on record its deep sense of gratitude, affection and appreciation for his important contribution to the Council's deliberations and his efforts and dedication in fulfilling his responsibilities."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for introducing the draft resolution. Those are words that are difficult to respond to. Members must know that I have totally depended on you throughout the time that we have struggled together. I feel humbled that you have seen something extra in me, but I must tell you that I saw a great deal in you. You fired my inspiration; I do not want to name individuals, but each of you individually and collectively inspired me. On my own, I could not have done it.

(The President)

I shall faithfully report to my Government the expression which the Council has reflected in the form of a draft resolution. For the moment, I thank all members personally for taking this action and for placing on the Council's records the contribution which my country and I have made. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Council adopts the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted.

STATEMENT BY MR. HAGE GEINGOB, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Prime Minister of Namibia, Comrade Hage Geingob, has kindly agreed to address the closing meeting of the special plenary meetings. I must apologize to him for keeping him waiting. He understands the reason, which is that we had to arrive at some agreed language at the last moment. We have overcome that difficulty and it is my pleasure now to invite the Prime Minister to deliver the closing statement of our meetings.

Mr. GEINGOB (Namibia): It gives me great satisfaction to have been given the singular honour of closing these historic meetings of the Council, historic in the sense that they may be the last meetings of the Council in the form in which we have known it. The fact that it could be held in Namibia is a fitting tribute to its excellent work over the years.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

What we are witnessing today is the conclusion of an extremely successful journey. It was indeed a long and arduous journey. I feel greatly privileged to have been around during those difficult days of the creation of the Council, to have seen it grow from very humble beginnings into a formidable anti-colonial body. I remember very vividly the termination debate in 1966 that followed the World Court's non-decision. We then had to set up an instrument that could take care of Namibia's interests on behalf of the United Nations family. At the time there were differing views on how that ought to be done, thus leading to a split. One group advocated the appointment of a special representative to study how the United Nations could best assume direct responsibility. Another group demanded immediate independence. The third group, consisting mainly of Asian and African representatives, joined by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), prevailed with the creation of a caretaker body to fill the vacuum created by the termination of South Africa's Mandate. That caretaker body turned out to be this Council: then the United Nations Council for South West Africa and now the United Nations Council for Namibia.

As a matter of fact, some of the representatives who supported termination of South Africa's Mandate abstained at the special session that created the Council. At the time the Council consisted of only 11 members, and it had a lonely road to traverse. The Council was a laughing-stock at the United Nations, as those that mattered did not support it. However, in spite of all the difficulties, the Council held high the banner of freedom, and today it is here with us in a free and independent Namibia - clear testimony to the rightness of the course it supported. Like the SWAPO freedom fighters, the Council has come to Namibia as conquerors. It has come to tell the world from Namibian soil that it has accomplished its mission and is now winding up.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

Mr. President, let me take this opportunity to thank you for your, and the Council's, commitment to the Namibian people's struggle for freedom and justice. Your personal commitment to our struggle for freedom and justice comes as no surprise to many of us, because you come from a country whose President, His Excellency Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, is an ardent supporter of the freedom struggle. We also salute and thank all your compatriots who were your predecessors.

We salute all former Commissioners for Namibia and all Member States which sacrificed their national interests to devote a great deal of time and resources at the United Nations to the Namibian question. On an occasion like this, one cannot resist the temptation to mention individuals who did a great deal to bring Namibia onto the world map - for example, Ambassador Vernon Mwaanga of Zambia, Ambassador John Malesela of Tanzania, Mr. Abdul Rateb Wahab of Egypt, Mr. Pejic of Yugoslavia, who is present here today, and India's present Ambassador to the United Nations, all of whom spearheaded the creation of the United Nations Council for Namibia. Also on the list is Mr. Petro Vlashiano, who is also here, a relative latecomer but one who joined the fold and has devoted a lot of his time and energy to the Namibian cause. I remember when he first came he could not speak a word of English, and today he speaks it fluently. One recalls many a Guyanese who contributed immensely to the Council's work: people such as Polhard, Jackson - current Minister for Foreign Affairs - Saint-Claire and many others. The list is long and I have left some names out; I just wanted to highlight a few with whom I worked when the Council was being created.

I am credibly informed that during its two and a half days of deliberations the Council has discussed in great detail and resolved how to deal with its assets. It is thus announcing to the world the conclusion of a successful journey.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

In your opening remarks, Mr. President, you described how the Council was prevented from entering Namibia and how only those considered "impartial" by South Africa were allowed in. I might mention that when we in SWAPO arrived here we came as strangers. We used to have to use the side entrances at the airports. We never knew there were VIP lounges at the airports; I now have access to five of them.

The very people considered then by South Africa to be "impartial" are those who now claim success in Namibia's victory. As the adage goes, success has many parents. But we know very well the true parents of the success Namibia has scored. We know those in the Council have devoted their time in support of Namibia. We know there are those who worked very hard to make this day a success.

When I hear questions about the leading role SWAPO played in the struggle, I note that Namibians do not question its leading role, both during the armed struggle and then when we came here and campaigned. Our campaign was a peaceful one. We won the election very convincingly, which proved we had a leading role to play. Then we spearheaded the drafting of the Constitution and played a leading role in providing peace, harmony and co-operation in the drafting process. In the end, all parties accepted the Constitution. Representing SWAPO, I was Chairman of the body concerned. Then a policy of reconciliation was adopted, which is not easy when people have been fighting one another - including a propaganda war - for so many years. As a party playing a leading role, when we returned to the country we regarded reconciliation as an official policy. That is the role SWAPO played and will continue to play.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

When the idea of having a last plenary session of the Council was first mooted we said - and you, Mr. President, agreed - that it must be in a free, sovereign and independent Namibia. The hand-over, it was agreed, should be made to an elected Government of Namibia. As trustees, the Council could not hand over its trust to anybody but the rightful beneficiaries. Thus, you came here to hand over your trust to Comrade Sam Nujoma, representing the Namibian people. We therefore thank you once more for the selfless contribution you made to our struggle.

I now have the great honour and privilege to declare the successful deliberations of the United Nations Council for Namibia here in Windhoek closed.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Prime Minister for his very inspiring statement.

CLOSURE OF THE SPECIAL PLENARY MEETINGS

The PRESIDENT: We have very nearly reached the end, in more ways than one. In the most immediate sense, we have reached the end of our series of plenary meetings, the first session of the Council for Namibia ever to be held on Namibian soil. Thanks to the diligence of the Drafting Committee, the brevity of speakers in the general debate and the efficiency of the support services on all sides, we have been able to complete our work a few hours ahead of schedule. We thus have a little extra time at our disposal to explore the capital of this wonderful country, whose independence, finally achieved after so many years of suffering, was our Council's very raison d'être.

There is very little I can add at this stage to what has already been said in the general debate, the Declaration of the special plenary meetings and the resolution of thanks to the host country. I can only say that it has been a most gratifying experience to convene the Council for Namibia in Namibia after so many years of meetings abroad. And the natural complement to that feeling is our deep

(The President)

joy and satisfaction at seeing His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, the Honourable Hage Geingob, Prime Minister and the Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs - people with whom we have worked for so long - and other stalwarts of the Namibian liberation cause, taking their rightful place as leaders of a free and independent Namibia. The trials of a long struggle, both inside Namibia and in exile, have prepared them well to meet the challenges of guiding a fledgling nation. The wisdom of Namibia's new leaders, combined with the remarkable enthusiasm and goodwill of the Namibian people, spell out a formula for great success in governance and for rapid progress towards a just, prosperous and humane society.

In my opening remarks I spoke of more than one kind of ending. The special meetings have come to an end, and our mandate as a Council is also coming to an end after 23 years of work on behalf of Namibia. In the interests of colourful speechifying, one is tempted to speak of "swan songs" and to resort to all sorts of funereal metaphors. But that would be wrong on this occasion. In its essence the Council for Namibia is a group of States joined together in common cause under the banner of the United Nations. So we are not dying. Rather, we are closing shop, content in the knowledge that our mission has been accomplished.

On that happy note, I bid all of you a very enjoyable conclusion to your stay in Namibia and a very safe trip home. We shall meet in New York. There are many struggles ahead, but this one is over. Victory is yours.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to express thanks to the members of the Department of Conference Services, the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) for their co-operation in

(The President)

bringing these meetings to a successful conclusion. I would take this opportunity sincerely to thank the secretariat of the Council for Namibia for its invaluable support through the years.

I now declare these special plenary meetings closed.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.